

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9008

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 1814

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PK, IN

SUBJ: PAKISTANIS PEACEFULLY PROTEST INDIRA-ABDULLAH
AGREEMENT

REF: ISLAMABAD 1675

SUMMARY: ALL NORMAL PUBLIC ACTIVITY IN PAKISTAN AND AZAD KASHMIR
CAME TO A STANDSTILL FEBRUARY 28 IN RESPONSE TO BHUTTO'S
HARTAL CALL. END SUMMARY

1. NORMAL PUBLIC LIFE IN PAKISTAN AND AZAD KASHMIR GROUND TO A
HALT FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28 IN RESPONSE TO PRIME MINISTER
BHUTTO'S CALL FOR A HARTAL TO PROTEST THE AGREEMENT
BETWEEN INDIRA GANDHI AND SHEIKH ABDULLAH IN INDIAN-HELD
KASHMIR. ACCORDING ALL ACCOUNTS, ALL GOVERNMENT OFFICES,
LAW COURTS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, BUSINESS CENTERS,
PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CINEMAS, RESTAURANTS AND CLUBS CLOSED
DOWN, WITH ONLY EMERGENCY SERVICES REMAINING OPEN. THE
PRESS, TV AND RADIO CONTINUED TO FUNCTION TO GIVE MAXIMUM
PUBLICITY TO THE EVENT.

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WM WHILE PUBLIC PROCESSIONS IN THE CAPITAL WERE DISCOURAGED, LARGE PUBLIC MEETINGS WERE HELD IN AZAD KASHMIR AND AMONG KASHMIRIS LIVING IN PAKISTAN. IN MUZAFFARABAD, A LARGELY ATTENDED PUBLIC MEETING WAS ADDRESSED BY THE A.K. PRESIDENT AND THE LEADERS OF THE FOUR MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND SIMILAR MEETINGS WERE HELD IN A.K. DISTRICT AND TEHSIL (SUB-DISTRICT) HEADQUARTER TOWNS. PRINCIPAL THEMES WERE DENUNCIATION INDIAN USURPATION OF KASHMIR, ABDULLAH'S TREACHERY TO CAUSE OF KASHMIRI MUSLIMS AND REITERATION OF KASHMIRIS'RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. ELSEWHERE, SMALL BLACK-FLAG PROCESSIONS MARCHED THROUGH THE EMPTY THOROUGHFARES, RAISING SLOGANS AND CARRYING PLACARDS, BUT MOST PAKISTANIS STAYED QUIETLY AT HOME. RUMORS THAT CROWDS WOULD THROW STONES AT CARS KEPT MOST PEOPLE OFF THE STREETS.

3. FROM LARKHANA, BHUTTO ISSUED A STATEMENT LATE FEBRUARY 28 THANKING THE PEOPLE FOR THEIR "MAGNIFICANT RESPONSE" AND DECLARED THE HARTAL A SUCCESS IN DEMONSTRATING "OUR SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR AND OUR UNSHAKABLE RESOLVE TO UPHOLD THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION."

4. PAK NEWS MEDIA LATE ON 28TH AND IN PAPERS 29TH QUOTED REUTERS AND ALL-INDIA RADIO REPORTS OF CLASHES IN SRINAGAR BETWEEN FOLLOWERS OF ABDULLAH AND MIR WAIZ MOHAMMAD FAROOQ OF AWAMI ACTION COMMITTEE. PAKISTAN TIMES ON 29TH ALSO NOTED THAT PAKISTANIS AND KASHMIRIS LIVING ABROAD HAD OBSERVED HARTAL IN SUCH PLACES AS NEW YORK, KATHMANDU, TRIPOLI, LONDON AND OTHER CITIES IN U.K. TIMES REPORTED STRIKE WAS MOST SUCCESSFUL "IN COUNTRY'S 27 YEARS HISTORY."
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